

# Floor Openings, Floor Holes, & Open-Sided Floors

WAC 296-800-260

## Summary

### YOUR RESPONSIBILITY:

**To safely guard floor openings, floor holes, and open-sided floors in your workplace**

#### You must:

Guard or cover floor openings and floor holes  
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Protect open-sided floors and platforms  
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# Floor Openings, Floor Holes, & Open-Sided Floors

WAC 296-800-260

## Rule

WAC 296-800-26005

### Guard or cover floor openings and floor holes



#### Definition:

- A floor opening is an opening in any floor, platform, pavement, or yard that measures at least 12 inches in its smallest dimension and through which a person can fall.

Examples of floor openings are:

- Hatchways
  - Stair or ladder openings
  - Pits
  - Large manholes
- The following are **not** considered floor openings:
    - Openings occupied by elevators
    - Dumbwaiters
    - Conveyors
    - Machinery
    - Containers
  - A floor hole is an opening in any floor, platform, pavement, or yard that measures at least one inch but less than 12 inches at its smallest dimension and through which materials and tools (but not people) can fall.

Examples of floor holes are:

- Belt holes
- Pipe openings
- Slot openings

**-Continued-**

# Floor Openings, Floor Holes, & Open-Sided Floors

WAC 296-800-260

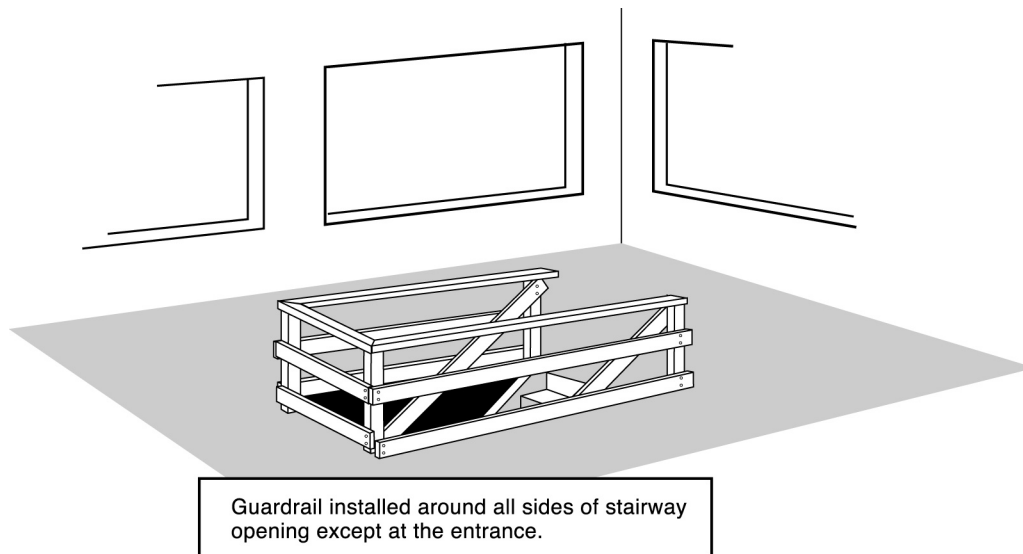
## Rule

### WAC 296-800-26005 (Continued)

#### You must

(1) Guard stairway floor openings, temporary floor openings and floor holes.

- Protect all stairway floor openings with a railing. The railing must protect all open sides except the stairway entrance side.



- Use a hinged cover and a removable railing where traffic across an infrequently used stairway floor opening prevents the installation of a fixed railing. This removable railing must protect all open sides except the stairway entrance side.
- Protect temporary floor openings by either a railing or by a person who constantly attends the opening.

-Continued-



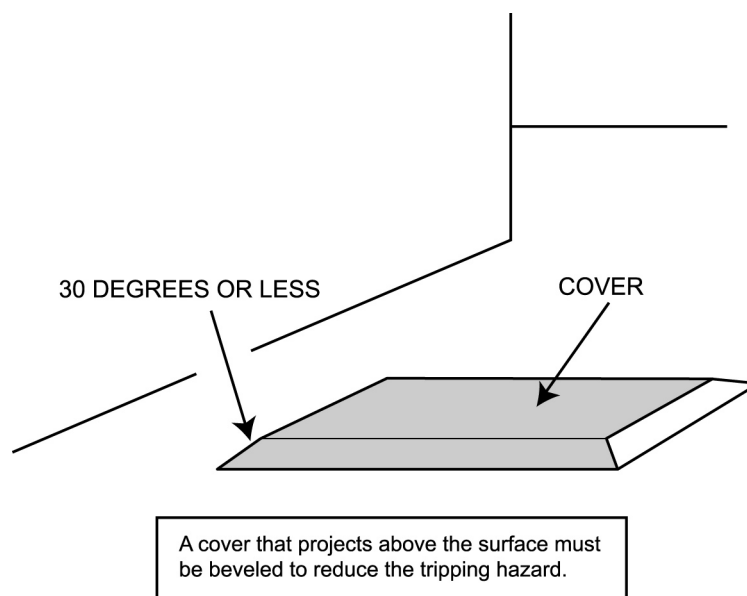
# Floor Openings, Floor Holes, & Open-Sided Floors

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## Rule

### WAC 296-800-26005 (Continued)

- Protect exposed floor holes into which a person can accidentally walk by either
  - A railing with a toeboard on all open sides.
  - OR
  - A floor hole cover of standard strength and construction that can be hinged in place. When a floor hole cover isn't in place, the hole must be protected by a removable railing or constantly attended by someone.
- Provide covers for floor openings. Floor opening covers may be of any material that has a safety factor of 4, or is strong enough to hold up to 4 times the intended load. Covers that don't project more than one inch above the floor level may be used providing all edges are beveled (slanted) to prevent tripping. All hinges, handles, bolts, or other parts of a cover must set flush with the floor or cover surface.



- (2) Prevent tools and materials from falling through a floor hole. The floor hole must be protected by a cover that leaves an opening no more than one inch wide and is securely held in place. This applies only to floor holes that persons can't accidentally walk into on account of fixed machinery, equipment, or walls.

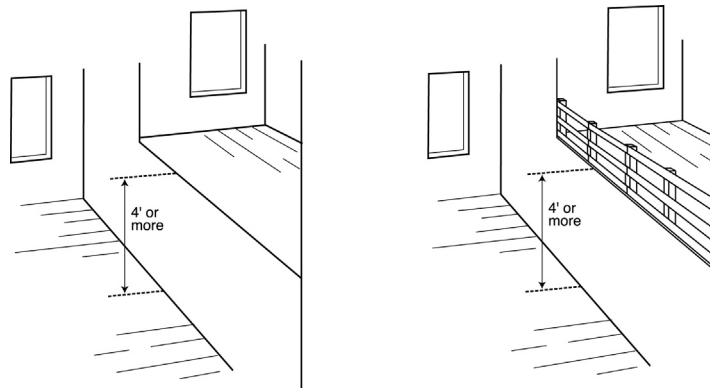
# Floor Openings, Floor Holes, & Open-Sided Floors

WAC 296-800-260

## Rule

WAC 296-800-26010

### Protect open-sided floors and platforms



OPEN FLOOR (Unguarded)

GUARDED FLOOR

### You must

(1) Guard open-sided floors and platforms.

- Guard open-sided floors and platforms 4 feet or more above adjacent floor or ground level by a railing. The entrance to a ramp, stairway, or fixed ladder doesn't need a railing.
- Guard open-sided floors, walkways and platforms above or adjacent to dangerous equipment, pickling or galvanizing tanks, degreasing units, and other similar hazards, regardless of height with a railing and toeboard.

(2) Make sure tools and loose materials aren't left on overhead platforms and scaffolds.



#### Note:

- Where the guarding rules above don't apply because employees exposure to falls is infrequent (not on a predictable and regular basis), you must comply with the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) rules (WAC 296-800-160) or other effective fall protection must be provided.
- You can find the minimum requirements for standard railings of various types of construction in WAC 296-24-75011.



# Notes

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